

## MORE ABOUT LIGHTNING

In a recent issue of TRUE magazine, January 1963, there was an article on Lightning written by the staff. The following is a summary of the article.

"There is a lot more to a lightning bolt than electricity. The 25,000 amperes in an average bolt account for only one-fourth of its energy. The other 75% is delivered in the form of heat, with temperatures running clear up to 50,000 degrees F. As the bolt hits a tree, it is channeled through the moist inner bark, which is, because of its high water content, the most conductive part of the tree. The instantaneous superheating of this moisture actually creates a tremendous steam explosion that can rip a tree apart with such violence that chunks of wood can be hurled hundreds of feet."

"A study by the National Shade Tree Conference reveals that the oak, which has a particularly high water content, is lightning's favorite target among trees. It is 62 times more likely to be struck than a beech, on whose smoothed-barked surface rain forms a continu-

ous moisture shield. When smooth-barked trees are struck by lightning, they are less likely to suffer severe damage, for the heat is dissipated directly into the air from that outer moist coating."

The article continues: "While the steam explosion does most of the damage to a tree, it's just plain sizzling electricity that injures the man or beast who takes refuge under it. You don't even have to be near the tree to get killed. Sometimes the electricity running down the tree electrifies the wet ground around it. In 1959, seven cows in a Long Island field were killed by a bolt of lightning which struck a tree. It ran through the ground for 300 feet to reach some of the living targets."

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